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A

LETTER

TO

DOCTOR ZABDIEL BOYLSTON ;

Occasion'd by a late

Dissertation

CONCERNING

INOCULATION;

Printed at Boston.

*Cum tot in hac — Populorum vita Salusq;
Pendeat —*

Sævitia est voluisse mori.

LUCAN Pharsal. l. 5.

B O S T O N :

Printed for D. HENCHMAN over against the
old Brick-Meeting House in Cornhil, and T.
HANCOCK at the sign of the Bible and three
Crowns in Annstreet. M. DCC. XXX.

LETTER

TO

THE HONORABLE SENATE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION PASSED

APRIL 18, 1860

RELATIVE TO THE

PROSECUTION OF

THE CASE OF

JOHN A. BROWN, & OTHERS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

RECENTLY PASSED

ACT OF THE SENATE, RELATIVE TO THE

PROSECUTION OF THE CASE OF

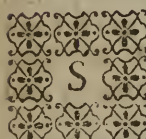
JOHN A. BROWN, & OTHERS



T O

Doctor *Zabdiel Boylston.*

Dear Sir,

 O great is your Practice both in Town and Country, and such is your Care and Tho't of your Patients, that I believe you have hardly any time to Read D^s' *Dissertation of the Inoculation of the Small-Pox* : You will therefore take it not amiss, if I save you the labour of reading that injudicious Piece, by giving you this Evening some Strictures upon it.

It surprized me to find one, who is reputed a Scholar, and values himself upon a Degree which he little deserves, committing several manifest *Grammatical Blunders* in a Sheet or two : And yet if he had reserved them all for the *Dissertation*, I should have forgiven them ; but I can by no means excuse *any one in a Dedication* : Methinks he might, in honour to his Degree and Character, have afforded good Mr. Jekyll his Patron good sense for a Quarter of a Sheet without any Error at all ; but it

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seems

seems he has not ; whether it proceeded from an unhappy Ignorance, or a noble Negligence one may easily conjecture : *To speak in Medical Terms*, says he, *Integrity seems to be in the Constitution of your Family*. He may call you a *Quack*, if he pleases ; but I am sure he is a *Blunderbuss* to make *the Constitution of Mr. JEKYLL's Family Medical Terms*. And by the way, here, he seems to me to be as much out in point of *Decency*, as in *Grammar* : For I cannot but think it a great, invidious and inexcusable Neglect in him, when he mentions Mr. JEKYLL's Family and its *Constitution*, and applauds his *Uncle*, to overlook his Reverend *Father*, who was an Eminent Clergyman, and as I have been inform'd from undoubted Authorities, was highly esteemed for his *Probity, Integrity* and many more *Virtues*.

THERE are one or two considerable Errors more of his in the *Dedication*, and diverse gross ones in the *Dissertation* ; but I shall not stay to expose them ; lest You, and others, should think I regard his *Words* more than his *Meaning* and his *Sounds* rather than his *Sense*.

BEFORE I come to what immediately relates to the Controversy concerning *Inoculation* ; I must inform You, that our Author says in his *Dedication*, *Without Passion or Prejudice — I shall impartially relate the History, &c.* But, notwithstanding this good Promise, in his Book he shews his old *Passion & Prejudice* against You, & your excellent Friend the late Doctor MATHER.

IN pag. 10. he says, *he can seldom have recourse to your Accounts* ; I expected his Reason would be,

be, because they were scarce here when he wrote his Dissertation ; but his Reason is, *because (as he says) of their being so jejune, lame, suspected, and only in the nature of a Quack Bill.* If this be a good Reason ; many, and I in particular, can seldom have recourse to his insipid Pamphlet : For many things are *jejune and lame* in it, I suspect several things, and I verily believe any *Quack* in *Christendom* would, with the Assistance he has had, produce as good a Performance. And as for your part, you need not regard his Character of *your Account* of Inoculation here, when it has been approved by Dr. JURIN the late Secretary of the Royal Society, and many other Persons of Learning and Figure ; and when (notwithstanding he calls your *Dedication* of it to the Princess of WALES *assuming*) it met with a kinder Reception from her Royal Highness, and a more favourable Entertainment from all the wise and impartial, than his *Dissertation* ever ought to or will have among Men of Understanding, or his *Dedication* from his Patron. And so much concerning your Book.

As to you your self he tells us, that when your *Business* ran low here, you went for LONDON, and expected under the Character of an experienced Inoculator, a profitable Encouragement there, but was entirely disappointed, pag. 7. This is an idle surmise, and great Untruth of his ; for you went not to LONDON under that Character he tells of ; nor, as you have informed me, would you inoculate there ; tho' you were often pressed and encouraged to it.

BUT he is not content with a rude Usage of
you

you in his *Dissertation* ; He must also tell his Patron, that you are a Man of *no Literature and habitual Rashness*. I must confess, that I look upon you to be as well acquainted with your Business as the *Graduated Doctor* : You seem, from what I can learn, as well as he, to understand *the Theory of Diseases* ; and as to the *Curing* of them, I believe every Practitioner in *Physick* at BOSTON will give you the Preference. Nor do I think any of them will blame you for *the habitual Rashness*, which he charges you with, so much as they do and will him for his *actual Rashness* in many Instances, but especially with Regard to his Excellency our late Governour.-- *Nec te, improbe, Saltem--Terruit Exemplo Phaeton*. I have now done with you, Doctor, but not with D--s ; nor shall I, on his Account, leave off my Letter this good while.

D--s has but *few words and spiteful* of Dr. MATHER ; but it had been better for him to have said nothing at all than to traduce and lessen the Character of that great Man : He might well think every good Man would condemn every *disgraceful word* given out concerning that Pious & Learned Gentleman, & at the same time abhor *the Person* who speaks or writes it.

I shall not dwell on his saying the Doctor had 'TIMONIUS' and PYLARINUS's Accounts *sur-reptiously*, which is a paltry word, and has an ill sound : What does the Blade mean by it ? Would he make us believe the Doctor *Stole* the Book from some-body he lent it to, that so he might have *the Honour of the new fangled Notion*, p 2. Yes, so his words plainly import :
But

But such an Insinuation, (besides the *weakness* he betrays in it ; inasmuch as he (imagining the aforesaid Accounts, published to the World to be his *private Property*) supposes no one, but *he*, had any Right to know the Purport of them) it conveys also in it a *notorious Falsity* ; and therefore tends to the Disgrace of the *Accuser*, and is no Disparagement to the *Deceased*.-----When the Doctor was alive, he tho't it a *Praise and an Honour* to be *Dishonoured* and insulted by such Miscreants as *D---s* : and if he be *maletreated* now by such, it is still a *Glory* to him.

BUT I can by no means put up his 8th page : In that he says, *The best of men have some Foible, and that of Dr. MATHER's was Credulity*. How natural is it to retort here, that *the worst of men have many Foibles* ; and those of *Dr. D---s* seem to be *Incredulity, Malice and Ill-nature*. But suppose one should deny *Credulity* to be the Doctor's *Foible* ; the Instances he has bro't to prove it, in the aforesaid Page, will never do it : For several of the Matters of Fact therein are indisputably true, as there are many in *Boston* who can testify. *D---s* indeed says, *that allowing such bold Assertions without disproving them, would be leading Mankind into a Snare*. Why then did not he, first of all, *disprove* 'em, and then advise Mankind, as thoughtless Birds, to avoid *the Snare* ? Surely he was unwise that he did not at large demonstrate, that when *Dr. MATHER* said he *never knew Blistering miss of saving Life in the Small Pox, &c.* He did know that it had *missed*, He mistook or He lied. If
he

he had done so in this particular, and so in the rest, he would have *disproved* all the Doctor's Assertions in his Letters to the Royal Society. But after all, (if those Stories or Accounts were Mistakes,) they were undoubtedly the real Sentiments of the Doctor ; (as well as many others ;) and for D--s to treat his Communications (which men of the greatest Characters abroad receiv'd with Deference and Respect) with such Insolence and Rudeness, it proves him unworthy the Nation from which he boasts Original, and undeserving of any Esteem or Practice in the *American* Regions.

I shall not run into any long Animadversions on Dr. BRADY of *Portsmouth*, for saying (as D--s quotes him, p. 7.) *What wretched work the Gentleman* (h. e. Dr. MATHER) *makes in his Accounts ?* It was ridiculous in him to say so, unless he *knew* and could *prove* (which he could not) his *Accounts* to be *wretched* ; and it was *wretched Folly* in D--s to produce his Scribe for nothing ; unless indeed it might sooth him in his Misfortune, of being the Doctors Enemy and *Accuser*, to find one (as there now and then has happen'd such an one) who has detracted from the Doctor as well as he. But I shall not insist here.

NOR shall I add any thing further in Favour of the Doctor, but that I would have D--s know, if his *Credulity* was ever so great in other things ; he was not so *credulous* as to believe him endued with *Learning* or *Wit*, with *Vertue* or *Honour*, with *Civility* or *Manners* ; and I find a considerable part of the Town in this of the same Opinion with the Doctor. I

I said, I would add nothing further ; but I cannot help subjoining, that if D--s, or any other of the same rash and illjudging *Constitution* (he will forgive the *Medical Terms*) with him, shall dare to attack the Name and Reputation of the Doctor, he and they shall know, there are some who will always rise in his Defence to their Confusion.

AND now for *Inoculation* ! Without any foreign and useless Remarks, which would swell my Letter to a Volumn, let us come to the Merits of the Cause.

AND here, at the same Time that I am flush'd with Joy to find how frankly D--s owns that Dr. MEAD, Sir HANS SLOANE & PITCAIRN his Countryman, all celebrated Physicians, *countenanced and favoured* the Practice ; (tho' by the way this looks as if they had *Credulity* as well as Dr. MATHER) I am fill'd with sorrow that I have not one of those Gentlemen's Books by me, nor any one of the other Treatises, out of which D--s has selected Passages ; so that I cannot tell whether he has quoted them exactly or no : For my part my *Credulity* shall run so far as to allow it.

GRANTING then that all his Quotations are just and fair ; let us Examine the several Heads he has offer'd, under which he has collected *the Histories of Facts*, as he calls them, from Dr. NETTLETON, Mr. MAITLAND and others.

I. FROM NETTLETON and MAITLAND he says and shows, that *some receive not the Distemper at all*. And what then ? *Some receive not the Distemper at all* in the natural Way, when they are surrounded on every side with it : Perhaps

there may be no proper *Pabulum* in their Bodies for it to prey on. Why then should this be accounted an Objection against *Inoculation*? For how is it likely or possible that it should take Effect, when the *Fluids* are not in a Capacity to receive it? But granting they were, and allowing that the Operation had no such Effect as to procure the Distemper; still those who are Inoculated are not a whit the worse for it: Nay, I have Reason to think some have fared the *better* for it. The Reverend Mr. W-- now living at *Roxbury*, on whom it *did not take place*, (as D--s beautifully translates a Passage in PYLARINUS) has enjoyed his Health *since* he was inoculated much better than *before*; and he ascribes it, in part, to his *Incisions*.

2. HE remarks, from his Author Mr. MAITLAND that *some had only Eruptive Fevers*: I suppose, he means resulting from *Inoculation*, or he has no meaning at all. But who will be dissuaded from *Inoculation* if there really were two or three such Instances? Pray, Doctor BOYLSTON, when you see D--s ask him, Whether these *Eruptive Fevers* are the *natural* and genuine Effect of *Inoculation*, or whether (to use a word or two of his) they arise only from some *accidental Contagition*? If he says *the former*; you can easily prove the contrary by numerous witnesses and incontestible: For who among your inoculated Patients has had this *eruptive Fever*? Be so kind as to tell him or me, if *any one* has. But if he says *the latter*, it had been better for him to have laid aside his *diabetical Pen*, than permit its Dropping to so little Purpose.

3. HE takes notice from Dr. NETTLETON, that *others from Inoculation have the Small-Pox to so small a Degree as to admit of Doubt.* Dr. NETTLETON may say, that *in three of his Patients the Eruptions were so imperfect as to leave him in Doubt :* But then, as I remember, he somewhere observes, that his *Doubts* were dissipated at their Recovery ; for then they went any where, regardless of the Contagion and invulnerable : And if others fare in the same Manner, where will be the Disadvantage to *Inoculation* or those who receive it ? Sure I am this looks rather as a *Proof* and *Confirmation* of *Inoculation* than any *Objection* against it.

4. *OTHERS have the worst Sort.* For Peace sake, I am ready to allow D--s and his Friends this ; but he will allow me to say *modestly* with PYLARINUS, *they most frequently have the distinct Sort.* Here D--s may learnedly comment on *most frequently*, (as in pag. 11.) h. e. *not always* so. And I must confess, it is *not always* so, that those who are *inoculated* have the *distinct and best* Sort. It would be censur'd as unfair here, if I should say that such *may have received the Small-Pox before Inoculation* ; but is it not equally unjust to lay either the *coherent* or *confluent* Kind to *Inoculation* ? It is certainly as absurd, at least, to say, that even in Times of *General Infection* none may have taken the *Distemper before* they have been *inoculated* ; as it is unfair to pronounce such infected *before Inoculation* who have it very bad : So that under this Head the contending Parties may shake hands. But for Argument sake, I should be willing to allow that some
who

who have receiv'd the Small-Pox by *Incisions*, have yet been very full of *Pocks*, and even of the *confluent Kind* ; but then they are very few in Comparison with those who have a *benign Sort and favourable Symptoms*, as all who are not blind, or perversely wilful and illnatur'd, may See. Even the dull, the heavy-ey'd, the sleepy D--s himself can perceive it, and dares acknowledge it in pag. 25. and 26.

5. *SOME have died of it.* I am free to grant it, to oblige him, (who never obliged any body nor favoured any Thing, unless for his own Profit, viz.) our Graduated Friend. But if *some* have died, their Number is *very Small*. Dr. JURIN, as D--s confesses, has shewed that, of those who have been inoculated in *Great Britain*, *nine* only have died in 448, which is *one* in about 49, or 50. And the same ingenious Doctor has proved from the Bills of Mortality at *London*, that one in about 6, or 7, or 8. at farthest, have died of the *natural Small-Pox*. For my part I am ready to acknowledge, (what he desires and contends for pag. 22.) that but *one* in *ten* here have died of the *natural Small-Pox* ; or, if it will satisfy him and his Chronies, that but *one* in *Twenty* have given up the Ghost with it : And yet, when I have allowed this, the Practice of *Inoculation* appears by far the most *successful and advantageous*; and therefore every wise Man, in Danger of the *Small-Pox*, will prefer the taking of it by *Incisions*.

As for those who have died *under*, or *after*, or (if he pleases) of *Inoculation* in *New-England* ; I cannot but think, and I have the Pleasure to find that many are with me in the Opinion, that, if the sordid D--s had any Thing of the *Generous* in his abject Mind, he would have relied upon it, that you have fairly acknowledged

knowledg'd all and every one you know to have died under or of it : But it seems he won't believe you. And why ? Because, forsooth, *Mrs. G. whispers that there were many more who died of it.* And will Mr. Goose believe her *Whisper* sooner than your open Declaration ? And not she alone says this ; but (continues he p. 14.) *some Porters say that it was whisper'd in sundry Houses, where the Dead had been carried from, that the Person had been inoculated.* But if he places such Confidence in what *some Porters* heard whisper'd sure I am he deserves to be treated like a Porter. And I cannot but think it no *Small Reflection* on our *Ultrajectine Doctor* ; that he knows what the *Porters* say ; it looks as if he were acquainted with them. But this is not all. To these Reports he adds p. 15. *I am certain of one more who died after Inoculation, as they express it, having with her Inoculator attended her in her Illness, this was House-keeper to &c.* Here I could make You and myself merry with that admirable Paragraph, *having with her Inoculator attended her in her Illness* ; But I will not, as long as I know his Meaning. In Answer to which, I protest, first of all, that I question whether she was *Inoculated* ? But if she was, I maintain her Death is no Disgrace to *Inoculation* : For it is *whisper'd*, (And may not our *Whispers* be as good as *D--s* ?) that she was a *Strumpet*, who (if she had not at the time of her Inoculation some *soul Distemper*) had some Remains of the *Veneraal Taint* in her gross & filthy Body ; But if she were as chaste, virtuous & pure as *Diana* herself, her *Small Pox Fever*, he confesses began after two Days, I suppose he means on the third Day : It is therefore at least probable that the *Wench* had receiv'd the *Infection* before ; and by consequence it was hardly worth his while to make any noise about it.

As to what he has remark'd of Capt. OSBORN'S Account in the Royal Transactions ; it is enough to say, that those Words, *I knew of so many who were inoculated*, were expres'd in a loose and careless Manner by him ; and that all he seems to mean, is, he believ'd there had been *that Number* or thereabouts inoculated ; which indeed was all he could pretend to say : For it is questionable whether he did or could absolutely know, being at London, how many you had inoculated, unless you had sent him an Account, which I suppose you did not. From his Account therefore, for *D--s* to gather and assert that 20 or 30 Inoculated Persons are concealed, many of which (he says, p. 15.) *without Doubt are in their silent Graves* ; it shows he has a great deal of ill natur'd Partiality, unreasonable Prejudice and faulty Credulity against *Inoculation* Upon

Upon what he further relates (p. 15. & 16.) of the two Questions, which either he or some other Noddy askt; I shall only observe that I conceive the *latter* did not answer his Question so well as the *former*: For *Silence* is the best Answer to an impertinent Question, whether it be askt by a knowing Physician or an illiterate Mechanick.

6. D--s goes on, & says, that *Inoculation sometimes leaves Impostumations and other Ails*. For this he quotes a Passage of PYLARINUS, which I wish he had been so kind as to translate, but he would not; because that Author writes, however such Things have happened, *ravissime tamen*, they are most rare and unusual. So it has proved in *New-England*, and perhaps the same would have appeared more fully in *Brittain*, if due Care had been taken to *purge* the Restored.

7. D--s plumply affirms pag. 17. *those who have had a Genuine Small-Pox by Inoculation never can have it again in the natural way* by Reason and Experience. A bold Assertion this! But, as bold as it is, he says, *We may confidently pronounce it*; so that now he seems to be one of *us*. I believe, that he, and some other Doctors in Town, have held the contrary; and I hope they will shew themselves, now at least as ingenuous as he, by making a *publick Retraction*.

But what if from their Incisions, the Patients have not the *genuine Small-Pox*, but *imperfect Eruptions*? Will these excuse them from the *Small-Pox*? To be plain and open, Doctor BOYLSTONE, I would roundly say *No*. And I may well say so: For Dr. JURIN imagines it possible for those who have fairly had the *Small-Pox* in the *natural way* to have it a *Second Time*, and He brings an example for the Proof of it: This I could not but take Notice of in his *Treatise of Inoculation*, dedicated to the Princess of WALES; but not having his Book, which I obtain'd of a Friend, now by me, I cannot refer to the Page where this is reported. But upon it I think it proper to remark, that as the Instances of this *Second Infection* are uncommon in the *natural Way*; So they are unusual in the way of *Incisions*: They are scarcer, a far greater Rarity than *Pious* and *Religious Physicians*: For *ubi tres Medici, ibi duo Athei*; but among *three hundred Persons* who have had the *Small-Pox* from *Incisions*, there have hardly been *two*, who have had it again.

8. He says p. 20. *If it is not us'd with Circumspection, it is of pernicious Consequence to populous and Trading Towns*. Here I frankly acknowledge, that, if only *two or three Persons* have the *Small Pox* in a *City or Town*, and there were no likelihood

likelihood of its Spreading, it is not so proper ; nay, to gratify him, it is *pernicious* to inoculate and spread the Infection : But where many already have it, and several are daily visited with it, *unbounded Inoculation* (in his Style) seems to me so far from an *Hardship* and a *damping of Trade*, that I am verily perswaded, if all those in *Boston* who have not had the *Small Pox* would be *inoculated in one week*, it would be *vastly better* for the Town : For thereby we should be speedily rid of the Distemper. But now, if the *Small Pox* goes on in the usual Method, the Town must linger under it many Months, and its *Trade* and *Commerce* will not only be *damp'd* ; but have a *Stop* in a great Measure put to it for a considerable Time.

9. I have nothing to write against what he remarks (p. 21.) of the *Communication* of constitutional *Distempers* as a *Difficulty* : It will perhaps be found *one*, if the *Pus* be taken from those of *bad Constitutions* and *ill Habits* : But where will be the *Difficulty*, if the *Pus* be taken from one, who before the *Small Pox*, was a sound & vigorous Youth, whose Juices were in a *due State of Fluidity*, and who therefore was in *Perfect Health*. In this Case, I should think the Patient safe, and (to borrow from D--s) I should take all *Fear* to be *chimerical and conjectural*.

Thus I have gone through his several Heads or Propositions, which he has confirm'd by Authorities : I could easily animadvert on some more Particulars under those general Heads ; but it is Time almost to conclude my Letter.

Indeed I can't help thinking, that D--s himself, in pag. 25. has in a few Lines overthrown all the foregoing Part of his *Dissertation*, wherein the *Difficulties* and *Discouragements* of *Inoculation* are laid down by him : For there he allows, that the *Small Pox* receiv'd by Incisions is found not so mortal, and that the Symptoms are generally more favourable, than when it is receiv'd by accidental Contagion. Now, you, nor I, nor yet any other reasonable Man, can desire any more : For if the *Small Pox* is *less mortal* and the Symptoms are more favourable by *Incisions* than by the *natural way* ; then he is a *Simpleton*, not to say worse, who when he is in Danger, will not be *inoculated*. And then, if, as he further writes in the same Page, one may take the advantage of *benign Small-Pox Constitution* and a *favourable Season of the Year* ; if one may prepare his Body for it, and remove the *Anxiety* which some are possess'd with thro' *Fear of the Small Pox* : I say, if all these *Benefits* and *Advantages* flow from *Inoculation*, he, who is near the *Small Pox*, and does not get *inoculated*, either knows not his

his Interest or disregards his Welfare. D--s himself must have drawn *this Conclusion*, if he had made any Inference from what he says of the *Advantages of Inoculation*.

It pleases me much, that the Physicians in Town don't think *Inoculation criminal* now, whatever might be their Conceptions formerly : But D--s's Reason (I say his ; for it can never be theirs) is poor for obviating *their* suspicion that it was so ; viz. *The Example of the Royal Family*. I must confess their Example is of great Force ; and the success the Practice of Inoculation has met with on the *Royal Offspring*, the Hopes and Joys of *Britain* and its Dependencies is a strong Inducement and sufficient Encouragement to the Practice, were it in its own nature *indifferent* : But if the Practice be a *Crime* in it self, no Examples, however successful, in favour of it, would make it cease to be *criminal*.

What he says, (in page 26, viz. that the Practitioners in Town do generally resolve to perform the Operation when required) is very grateful to you, I believe, as well as the other Friends of Inoculation : It shows they have a just value for the Lives of good People : their Resolution is a credit, and their *Second Thoughts* will bring Honours to them : It is frequent for fallible Men to persevere in Mistakes thro' Pride or Obstinacy ; and yet it is monstrous, absurd and disreputable

But it is now high time to break off : I shall do so, by wishing that no one will be so *unadvised* as to trust himself in D--s hands under *Inoculation* ; (for I believe he still retains some of his *old Spleen* against the Practice) ; by letting you know that, let D--s write what he will about *Inoculation* or any Thing else, I will (if no one else will expose him) take lieure Opportunity to show his *Blunders and Errors* ; and by assuring you, that I am, with great Esteem and Affection,

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful humble Servant.

March 3.

1729, 30.

End.